

Article #33

What is LEED?

LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a voluntary, consensus-based national rating system for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings.

Developed by U.S. Green Building Council, LEED addresses all building types and all phases of design and construction, including; innovation & design, location & linkages, sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy & atmosphere, materials & resources, indoor environmental quality, and awareness & education. There are four levels; certified, silver, gold and platinum.

What is U.S. Green Building Council?

The USGBC is a non-profit organization committed to expanding sustainable building practices. Founded in 1993, it's composed of more than 13,500 organizations from across the building industry that are working to advance structures that are environmentally responsible, profitable, and healthy places to live and work.

What is the Massachusetts Collaborative for High Performance Schools?

This is a rating system for Massachusetts school buildings which is run by three state agencies; Mass. Technology Collaborative, Mass. Department of Education, and Mass. School Building Authority. It is similar to LEED but differs in two main ways; 1. MA-CHPS is designed specifically for schools, codes, and the climate of Mass., and 2. it has no fee associated for application review or certification.

Why build green?

Buildings are human habitat. The spaces in which we work, live and learn are integral to our quality of life and the health of our planet. Green buildings are healthier, use less energy, cost less to operate, and have a smaller environmental footprint.

Does it cost more to build green?

A 2003 study sponsored by Massachusetts showed that the added cost of building to LEED standards was about 2%. However, in calculating life-cycling costs, that initial higher cost can be paid back many times over during a 20-year period, due to lower operating costs and savings due to healthier and more productive occupants.

Are other communities in New England using these standards?

Acton, MA has a density-bonus clause in its zoning by-law for developers conforming to LEED.

Arlington, MA requires all new buildings, major renovation projects and additions, to achieve a LEED Silver rating.

Bangor, ME adopted a policy requiring all new city-owned construction and major renovation projects achieve LEED Certified.

Boston, MA added a section to its Zoning Code requiring LEED Certified or proof of a comparable level of measurable accountability for all public and private development projects over 50,000sq.ft.

Gov. Deval Patrick signed an executive order instructing all agencies involved in construction and major renovation projects over 20,000sq.ft. meet LEED Certified.

Derry Town, NH adopted a green building policy requiring all new construction and major renovations to town-owned projects achieve LEED Certified.

Many schools in Mass. have been built to MA-CHPS standards; including the Great Falls Middle School/Turners Falls High School in Montague.